

LOUISIANA SEED COMMISSION MEETING PROCEEDINGS

September 24, 2009

9:00 a.m.

Louisiana Department of Agriculture & Forestry Building

LDAF Veterans Memorial Auditorium

5825 Florida Boulevard

Baton Rouge, LA 70806

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 9:15 a.m. by Mr. Fred Bass, Confidential Assistant to Commissioner Mike Strain.

ROLL CALL

The roll was called by Ms. Tina Ficklin.

The following members or their Designees were present: Mr. Fred Bass, Designee for Commissioner Mike Strain; Dr. Steven Linscombe, Designee for the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service; Dr. David Boethel, representing Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station; Mr. Michael Hensgens, Designee for the Louisiana Ag. Industries Association; Mr. Kyle McCann, Designee for the Louisiana Farm Bureau Association. All Members or their Designees were present.

Others Present: Todd Parker, Assistant Commissioner of AES; Eric Gates, LDAF Seed Programs; Lester Cannon, LDAF Seed Programs; Tina Ficklin, LDAF Seed Programs. A quorum was declared.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Motion: Mr. Michael Hensgens made a motion to approve the minutes from November 7, 2008 Louisiana Seed Commission Meeting. Dr. David Boethel seconded the motion. Motion was approved unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

No old business was discussed.

NEW BUSINESS

Seed Dealer License Fee Increase

Motion: Mr. Michael Hensgens made a motion, seconded by Dr. David Boethel, to authorize a Notice-of-Intent to increase the Seed Dealer License Fee from \$75.00 to the maximum \$100.00 allowed by Louisiana state law beginning with the fiscal year 2011, effective July 1, 2010. Motion passed unanimously.

Virus-Tested Sugarcane Certification Standards Amendments

Reduction in the number of field inspections

In an effort to reduce costs to the department, and as a result of a reduced inspector workforce, the Seed Programs staff proposed that the Commission approve an

amendment to reduce the minimum number of field inspections for the Virus-tested Sugarcane fields from the current four inspections to three.

Motion: Dr. David Boethel made a motion, seconded by Mr. Michael Hensgens, to authorize a Notice-of-Intent to amend the current Virus-tested Sugarcane Certification standards to allow for a reduction in the minimum number of field inspections required to be performed by the Louisiana Department of Agriculture & Forestry from four to three inspections. Motion passed unanimously.

Inclusion of Mexican Rice Borer as harmful insect to the Louisiana Tissue Culture Certification Standards

The Seed Programs staff presented the proposed amendment to include the Mexican Rice Borer as a Harmful Insect in the Certification Standards. Evidence was presented from the LSU experts concerning the biology and aggressive nature of the Mexican Rice Borer. Based on this evidence, it was agreed that the acceptable tolerance to this harmful insect be set at zero for all classes of certified sugarcane.

Motion: Mr. Michael Hensgens made a motion, seconded by Dr. David Boethel, to authorize a Notice-of-Intent to include Mexican Rice Borer as a Harmful Insect into the Virus-Tested Sugarcane Certification Standards with a Zero tolerance level. Motion passed unanimously.

Sweet Potato Certification Standards Amendments

After meeting with LSU experts and a group of Sweet Potato industry leaders, it was agreed that due to the resurgence of interest in Sweet Potatoes, the certification standards needed to be updated. Currently, Louisiana offers two separate standards – one for Certified sweet potatoes and the second for Virus-tested sweet potatoes. To become more in-line with other sweet potato producing states, and to ensure that the most current cultural information is represented in the standards, the Seed Programs staff recommended that the two sets of standards be merged into one document.

Motion: Dr. David Boethel made a motion, seconded by Mr. Michael Hensgens, to authorize a Notice-of-Intent to merge the two standards into one updated set of standards. Motion passed unanimously.

Liberty Link (GMO) Rice Issue

2009-2010 Testing Regulations

Discussion: The Seed Programs staff shared with the Commission that the State of Arkansas was amending their testing guidelines to include carry-over rice seed, rough rice and random storage grain testing. Mr. Michael Hensgens offered that the industry wants to continue another year with zero detection of Liberty Link traits in rice, and that the mills continue to have the threat of non-sale of rice that originally tested clean. It was recommended by the staff to maintain the current regulations.

Motion: Mr. Michael Hensgens made a motion, seconded by Dr. David Boethel, to maintain the current regulations and to continue testing accordingly for the 2010 planting season. Motion unanimously approved. No rule change was required.

2009-2010 Liberty Link Sample Processing Fee

The staff informed the Commission that a \$50.00 processing fee would be put in place, to cover expenses relating to processing, handling and shipping, for all Liberty Link rice samples for the 2009-2010 testing season. Mr. Hensgens offered to the Board a possible source to generate the necessary processing fee funds through the rice mills. Mr. Hensgens stated that the rice mills would probably support a fee-based program to cover these additional expenses because this testing was critical to keeping exports moving in the U.S. Rice and Louisiana rice markets. Mr. Hensgens agreed to approach the US Rice Federation and others in the rice industry concerning this issue. Further discussion is needed with the industry leaders and departmental staff.

Motion: Dr. Steven Linscombe made a motion, seconded by Dr. David Boethel, for the \$50.00 administrative fee and to encourage further investigation into a mechanism to allow the rice mills to fund the fee.

Discussion: There is currently an issue in the rice production industry regarding the shattering of hybrid rice, and the resurgence of volunteer rice plants and commercial harvest of fields resulting from this. The issue lies in the dormancy of the hybrid. It was noted that hybrid seeds are much more viable and are able to withstand conditions that traditional seeds cannot. Dr. Steven Linscombe raised the question of these fields being harvested without being Liberty Link tested. It was noted by the staff that the crop would probably be in violation due to not generating from Liberty Link tested seed. However, the position was taken that it would follow the same rules as those pertaining to carry-over seed and sampled after harvest. Dr. Linscombe stated and everyone agreed that this was a very gray area and needed to be considered for future discussion.

The above issue prompted a second discussion regarding hybrid rice blends and if the degree of hybridity in blends is accurate. The question was asked if there was a protocol in place for verifying hybridity. Eric Gates stated that Bio Diagnostics, Inc. laboratory, as well as the Federal Seed Lab, was contacted regarding this issue in the past. Mr. Gates stated that he felt that neither one wanted to deal with this issue, due to efforts required and exorbitant costs involved.

The staff informed the Commission that they have a tour of Eurofins Gene Scan laboratory regarding Liberty Link testing and would take the opportunity at that time to address the issue of possible testing for hybridity.

Selection of Liberty Link Sample Testing Laboratory

The Seed Programs staff informed the Commission that Eurofins Gene Scan is being researched as replacing Bio Diagnostics in the Liberty Link sampling. No formal action was required.

OTHER BUSINESS**Refund of Certification Fees**

The Seed Programs staff informed the Commission that due to the current budget environment the actual costs of the certified tags, printing and administrative costs needs

to be taken out of the certification fee refunds prior to payment rather than offering the current 100% refund.

Motion: Mr. Michael Hensgens proposed a 70% maximum certification fee refund to cover printing and administrative costs. Motion was seconded by Kyle McCann. Motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Michael Hensgens. Seconded by Kyle McCann. Unanimously passed.